

Westminster Gazette



po box 147 westminster vt 05158

Our Community Newspaper @ www.westminstervt.org

Vol. 9, No.2 February 2013

“Clone Him” - Westminster Teacher Eric Rhomberg

“Clone him.” “He’s the best.” “A consummate teacher.” This is what students say about Eric Rhomberg in their course evaluations.

A long time Westminster resident, Eric came to Compass 13 years ago from Brattleboro Union High School, where he was voted teacher of the year by students there. In his years at Compass Eric has played a number of roles, the primary one being teaching high school science and math.

Like all teachers at Compass, he connects with students in multiple other ways—as a talented musician organizing rock band Exploratories or MCing a talent show, as a former high school and college soccer player helping coach, as an engaged community member leading a student group for Winter Term conducting field research on the Woolly Adelgid for the state forester, as well as leading the student judiciary committee.

Eric may be most known for his enthusiasm for scientific explosions, and other “WOW” factor exhibitions and labs that engage students actively in hands on science. Eric believes strongly in having students “do” science and not just hear about science. In his classes, students compete to construct electric generators that produce the most power, design and build cardboard planes to explore aerodynamics, and create biospheres to understand biological interactions.

Eric shares his vast experience as the professor for Antioch New England Graduate School’s science teaching methods course. This unique course involves Antioch graduate science students working with Compass students one afternoon each week, and then having their graduate level class held at Compass immediately following. This gives these developing teachers direct experience with actual students, and allows our students to share their learning with a group of committed science educators. One powerful experience for both the Compass and Antioch students is an end of semester “test” where each high school student has a one-on-one interview with an Antioch student to discuss what he or she learned in the term and to explore more deeply the Compass student’s science understanding.

For Community Service Winter Term at the end of February, Eric will



be working with a student team to design the new science and art labs. This group will study labs at other schools and colleges, and consult with scientists, artists, and architects to determine exactly what will go in a state of the art science lab to expand student learning. All the science teachers and students are excited about the new construction that will greatly enhance learning opportunities. Compass has been greatly successful with facilities adapted from the old Elks Club. This major new construction will extend resources for the arts, science, and recreation that will benefit students throughout the school.

Compass invites other community organizations to bring real world problems for our students to help with during Winter Term. Please contact Director Rick Gordon if you see a community need our students may help address.

You can learn more about Compass, Winter Term, and this new construction at an Open House scheduled February 5 from 6-8 pm. Please contact Betsy Jaffe at betsy@compass-school.org or 463-2525 for more information.

WHERE TO GET YOUR TOWN REPORTS

Copies of Town Reports will be available from Feb. 19 at the Westminster Town Hall, Westminster West School, Westminster West Library, Westminster Center School, Butterfield Library and the Health Center in Bellows Falls.

The Town will mail or distribute a copy of the report to any voter or resident upon request. To do so contact the Town office at 722-4255

DOG LICENSES AND RABIES SHOTS

2013 dog licenses are due by April 1. There will be a rabies clinic on March 30 from 10 a.m. to noon at the Highway Garage. The cost is \$10.

NOMINATE THE CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Dear Residents of Westminster:

Many Westminster citizens contribute their time, skills, and effort to make this a great community.

The Selectboard would like to recognize one of these outstanding citizens as “Westminster’s Citizen of the Year” at our next Town Meeting.

Is there someone you would like to nominate for this award? If you know someone who has worked to make Westminster a better community, please let us know.

Simply send us a letter letting us know who you would like to nominate along with a brief statement as to why you feel they should be Westminster’s Citizen of the Year.

Please send your nomination in a sealed envelope to: Citizen of the Year Nomination, Westminster Town Hall, P.O. Box 147, Westminster, VT 05158.

Nominations must be received by Feb. 12.

All nominations will be held in the strictest confidence. The honoree will be announced during Town Meeting at BFUHS on March 2, 2013.

Thank you.

*Westminster Selectboard
Paul Harlow, Chair; Craig Allen, Peter Barrett, Toby Young,
and Nathan Stoddard*

SCHEDULE FOR MEETINGS AND VOTING

UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 27
(BELLOWS FALLS UNION HIGH SCHOOL)

ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday, Feb. 27 at 7 p.m. in the BFUHS Auditorium

ANNUAL TOWN, SCHOOL & FIRE DISTRICT #3 MEETING

Saturday, March 2 at 10 a.m. in the BFUHS Auditorium

TOWN MEETING DAY

Vote on Australian ballot articles on Tuesday, March 5 from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Westminster Institute

LAST DAY TO BE ADDED TO THE CHECKLIST TO VOTE

Union High School District No. 27 Meeting: 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 20,
Annual Town Meeting: 5 pm on Wednesday, Feb. 27

FREE CHILD CARE AT TOWN MEETING

Sponsored by the Town of Westminster, free child care at the annual Town Meeting will be provided by the Meeting Waters YMCA at Bellows Falls Union High School on Saturday, March 2 from 9:45 a.m. to the end of the meeting.

Fun, enriching activities for Westminster children ages 6 months and up. Please send a bag lunch or plan to attend the luncheon with your child. Snack will be provided in the afternoon

In order for the Meeting Waters YMCA to plan its staffing, activities and snack, Pre-registration is required. You can pick up a form at the town hall or contact the Bellows Falls YMCA at 463-4769. The Forms are also going to be available at the Westminster Schools.

Send them or Fax them to Meetings Waters YMCA, 66 Atkinson Street, Bellows Falls, VT 05101 Or fax them to 463-3347.

**SECOND AND FINAL PROPERTY TAX INSTALLMENT DUE
FEB. 10. PAYMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED AS ON TIME IF
RECEIVED ON FEB. 11.**

Last Month's Mystery Photo



The photo was taken at the dedication of the stone marking the Court House location. The Daughters of the American Revolution of Brattleboro erected the stone in 1902.

The Revolutionary era drum is in the museum at the Westminster Town Hall, and tradition says it was used to call Patriots to arms during the Revolution and possibly the uprising at the Court House, i.e., the "Massacre."

The stone is located on the Kebbells property on U S Route 5 in the center of town. Correct answers for the January Westminster Gazette are: Pat Haas, Barbara Greenwood and Phyllis Anderson.



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Why change the look?
 In a rural region, many residents don't know public transit exists! The goal of **The Current's** look is to make it difficult NOT to notice us. The more people notice public transit, the more they are likely to get out of their cars and onto a bus!
 When you leave your car behind and ride **The Current**, you decrease your energy consumption, improve environmental quality, and save commuting costs.
 If you are unable to drive or don't have transportation, you can benefit by riding on our Dial-a-Ride and volunteer network.
 We Provide the Ride... so please tell us how we can improve to make that happen for you. Thank you for riding Connecticut River Transit last year and **The Current** this year.

Bellows Falls - Brattleboro Commuter Schedule																								
Bellows Falls to Brattleboro							Brattleboro to Bellows Falls																	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14											
5:45	6:00	6:02	6:07	6:09	6:12	6:25	6:27	6:37	W	6:44	7:00	7:00	7:02	7:12	7:17	7:26	7:28	7:40	7:44	7:47	7:50	8:00	—	
—	8:00	8:02	—	8:07	8:09	8:12	8:25	8:27	8:37	W	8:44	9:00	9:00	9:02	9:12	9:17	9:26	9:28	9:40	9:44	9:47	9:50	10:00	10:15
1:55	2:10	2:12	2:15	2:17	2:19	2:22	2:35	2:37	2:47	2:51	2:54	3:10	3:10	—	3:22	3:27	3:36	3:38	3:50	3:54	3:57	W	4:10	—
—	4:10	4:12	4:15	4:17	4:19	4:22	4:35	4:37	4:47	4:51	4:54	5:10	5:10	5:12	5:22	5:27	5:36	5:38	5:50	5:54	5:57	W	6:05	6:20

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SCHOOL BUDGET UPDATE

by Dan Axtell, School Board chair, 387-4145

The school budget (the one that will be voted on at Town Meeting on March 2) is up, but just how much depends on what you compare. The increase is mostly from unexpected Special Education expenses that have already started and a jump in health insurance.

The biggest number is 10%, when you compare the budget vote last year to the upcoming vote. However, last year we voted for two special articles with an additional \$43,600 of spending that came from a surplus. The State's comparison includes that in the budget and says it's up 9.2% instead. That's the amount you'll see on the "Three Prior Years Comparisons" page in the Town Report.

Our "Education Spending" ignores the expenses that are reimbursed by grants and other outside sources. Education spending is up 8.3%. Our per-equalized-pupil spending is up 9.4%, partly because of a drop in the weighted number of "equalized pupils."

Our elementary school population actually has a slight upward trend.

Westminster's "CLA" (common level of appraisal) dropped slightly after several years of increases. The increasing CLA had been holding down our school taxes for two years, but now it's pushing up our taxes a little. Finally, the High School's budget didn't go up noticeably, which is a big help. The latest estimate for next year's total school tax rate is \$1.56, up 9.1% from \$1.43 this year.

Most taxpayers in Westminster pay based on the "income cap percentage." They will pay a little less if their incomes were flat. However, if their income also increased at the rate of inflation, the increase will also be about 9%. For household incomes below \$47,000, the state provides some extra protection from tax increases.

One thing to note is that last year had an unusually low school tax rate. The school tax rate may be up 9% compared to last year, but up only 5% when compared to 2 years ago—and it's actually down 4% from the rate 3 years ago. These figures all come from the data that you'll see in the Town Report when it comes out in late February.

The School Board urges voters to read through the Town Report and come to Town Meeting at 10 a.m. on Saturday, March 2.

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER CARES

The Westminster Cares, Inc. Board of Directors met Jan. 8 with Vice President Susan Clifford presiding. The following board members were present: Susan Clifford, Pete Harrison, Heidi Anderson, Don Dawson, Kathy Elliot, Susan Harlow, Miriam Lanata, Sally Ryea, Reggie Borden, Director Ronnie Friedman and Assistant Director Donna Dawson. Nan Blanchard, Connie Sanderson and Barbara Carey were excused. Westminster Cares creates opportunities for seniors and disabled adults to live with independence and dignity in the community. Your support to this care-giving organization is a way for all of us to take care of our friends.

Services provided: Meals on Wheels - 22 different WC volunteers delivered meals throughout the month to 16 people on a daily basis.

Transportation – During the months of December, four different volunteers provided rides for six different people to medical appointments, shopping, or programs for a total of 100 miles.

Nursing program: During December our nurse made five visits to three different homes in Westminster for a total of six hours.

Equipment loan – several pieces of equipment loaned out in December and several pieces were donated. We have received donations of an electric wheel chair and an electric scooter which we would be happy to lend to someone who could make use of it [batteries will be needed for both]

Equipment needed. We still are in need of crutches with arm support. Thank you to our past and present donors.

Meetings attended in December included: bookkeeper, Gazette, Development Director, Web site, 25th anniversary committee, Senior Solutions, committees and care giving.

Programs during the December included: 1 Secrets of Healthy Aging session, two Yoga classes, 24 Strength Training classes held and three Artist in Each of Us classes, Wednesday walkers who meet most Wednesdays at the institute.

Anyone interested in learning more about Westminster Cares, volunteering to deliver meals on wheels or driving neighbors to doctor appointments, working on a committee, making a contribution or attending a workshop may contact Ronnie Friedman at 722-3607 or by e-mail at wecares@sover.net.

Equipment available: Walkers, commodes, shower chairs, wheel chairs, hospital beds, an electric wheel chair and an electric scooter.

Memorial Donations for part of December and January:

DECEMBER CONTINUED:

In memory of Judy Brown, long time school teacher, from Richard Brown

In memory of Anne Fairchild from Carolyn Fairchild

In memory of John T. Fletcher, Jr. from Clarence and Audrey Gochey

In memory of Charlie Edson from Cyndy Fine

In memory of Waew Kasetrevatin from Tim Cowles

In memory of Millie Ward from Paul and Lillian Chaffee

In memory of Giles Friedman, Fran Streeter and Anthony Spaulding from Edward and Patricia Walsh

In memory of Ralph Harlow from Lori Larue

In memory of Giles Harte Friedman from Frances Harte
 In memory of Giles Friedman from Ronnie and Richard Friedman
 In memory of Virginia Manning from Anonymous
 In memory of Giles Friedman from Joan Harte and Janet Lynch
 In memory of Norah Payne from Doug Sherwin and Yvette Durell
 In memory of Issy Parda from Steve and Valerie Barry
 In memory of Marie Wright from Norman Wright
 In memory of Pat Jennison from Cheryl Jennison
 In memory of Giles Friedman from Tim and Annette Harte
 In memory of Charlie Edson from Richard Michelman
 In memory of Norah Payne from Bill and Joan Smidutz
 In memory of Phyllis Norman from Scott and Wanda West
 In memory of Helen Cordano from Melinda Underwood
 In memory of Ralph Harlow from Paul Harlow
 In honor of my parents' 70th wedding anniversary from Kathryn Bowry
 In honor of Karen Walter from Hugh and Betty Haggerty
 In honor of Richard Johnson from Pete Harrison
 In honor of Ronnie, Donna and the Board from Sarah Waldo
 In honor of Bill and Harriet Connor from Rebecca McKenny
 In honor of P, W & R Clark and M, M & C DeRienzo from Susan Clifford

JANUARY:

In memory of Norah Payne from Jim and Colleen Grout
 In memory of Gertrude Kuttler from Tatiana Schreiber
 In memory of Joan Parker from Tom Walsh
 In memory of Rosalie Coven from Judy and Tony Coven
 In memory of Jeff Walsh from Fran Walsh
 In honor of Ronnie Friedman from Kathleen Pirruccello
 In honor of Susan Clifford from Warner Clark

WHO IS RUNNING ? - OFFICES & CANDIDATES

	Incumbent	Candidates
Moderator (1) Town School	Fletcher D. Proctor	Fletcher D. Proctor
Fire District	Fletcher D. Proctor	Fletcher D. Proctor
Selectman (3)	Fletcher D. Proctor	Fletcher D. Proctor
	Paul Harlow	Paul Banik
		Stephen Major
Selectman (2)	Craig Allen	Craig Allen
Lister (3)	Harland (Harley) Rounds	Harland (Harley) Rounds
Town Grand Juror (1)	Margaret (Peggy) O'Toole	
Town Grand Juror (1)	M L (Sam) Streeter	M L (Sam) Streeter
Town Agent (1)	Fletcher D. Proctor	Fletcher D. Proctor
Trustee, Campbell Fund (3)	Peter Harrison	Peter Harrison
Commissioner, Campbell Fund (1)	Vacant	
Commissioner, Campbell Fund (1)	Ila Mitchell	Ila Mitchell
Commissioner, Campbell Fund (1)	Karen S. Walter	Karen S. Walter
Trustee, Public Funds (3)	Peter Harrison	Peter Harrison
Town School Director (3)	David Ramos	David Ramos
Town School Director (2)	Molly Banik	Molly Banik
Union High School Director #27 (3)	Stephen Major	David Ramos
Fire District #3 Prudential (3)	David Wright	David Wright

A PRE-VOTING UPDATE FROM TOWN MANAGER MATT DASKAL

As Town Meeting approaches it seems a natural time to provide an update from Town Hall. Included in this month's Gazette you will find information on the upcoming Town Meeting. The Selectboard recently adopted its Proposed Budget which will be presented at Town Meeting. The Selectboard Proposed Budget totals \$1,962,295 including previously voted articles, or an increase of \$64,968 or 3% over the Fiscal Year 2013 Adopted Budget.

Reappraisal is still ongoing, but a projected increase in the grand list (town property value) indicates that this budget may result in a decrease in tax rate of 4%. The Town Meeting Warning also includes a \$37,000 article that proposes increasing the Sheriff's Department contract to offer the equivalent of a full time deputy. Over the last month the Selectboard has worked long and hard to develop a reasonable, defensible, budget.

This year's budget took a hard line on spending, and increases where they do

increase are largely due to fuel and utility costs, as well as capital projects that were reduced in previous years.

In other Town Hall news, the updates are being finalizing to the Town Zoning Ordinance. Winter is in full swing and the Highway Department deserves credit as it continues to work long and hard to keep roads clear and passable. During the last two storms it is notable to report no accidents on Town roads.

Also, Michelle Lopez, who many have interacted with through her role here in the Town Manager and Zoning offices, has announced her resignation at the end of January. The position has been advertised and we are seeing a strong interest and response.

As always please feel free to stop in or call anytime if you have questions or concerns. I hope to see everyone at Town Meeting.

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER VOLUNTEER FIRE AND RESCUE

The Westminster Fire & Rescue Department holds their monthly meetings at 7 p.m. on the first Tuesday of every month and a combined drill on the third Tuesday of every month. Rescue training is the second Tuesday of the month.

Next association meeting is Feb. 5 at 7 p.m.

The Prudential Committee meets twice a month on the first and third Monday after the first Tuesday at 7 p.m.

February Prudential meetings: 11th & 25th.

Number of calls in December: 32

Number of calls through Jan. 30th: 24

Number of calls calendar year to Date: 24

Number of calls fiscal year to date: 202

Association Meeting: The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular monthly meeting Jan. 8 with President Greg Holton presiding. There were 25 members present and 8 members excused. Currently there are 43 members of the volunteer fire department.

Scholarship Fund: The members of the association decided they would like to set up a scholarship fund to be given to a Westminster resident who graduates from the Bellows Falls Union High School. The amount of the scholarship is \$500. To qualify, the student must be pursuing a career in some area of emergency work.

Studebaker: The restoration of the 1952 Studebaker fire truck is well on the way and nearing completion. Thanks to Gib Gay and others who assisted him, a major portion of the project has been completed over the past few months. The goal at this point is to have it in the Saxtons River parade July 4th. [see article by photo]

Ice Skating Rink: The ice skating rink on the East Side of the Westminster Central School is ready for use. Some of the volunteers of the Westminster Fire Department have been busy flooding the area. The rink is open to the public.

Caution: Please remove any ice or snow from your roofs. There are 2 reasons. One, the weight of the snow and ice could cause your roof to collapse and two, when it slides off the roof it could do damage or hurt someone including a pet.

Batteries should be changed in smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. Also, check the back of the carbon monoxide detector for operation instructions and alarm function. You may be able to avoid an unnecessary call to the Fire Department.

Coals and ashes: When removing coals and ashes from a wood stove or fireplace, first put them in a covered metal, repeat, metal container. Then put them outside away from the house or other buildings. Several homes are lost each year when ashes are left in a container on a wood floor, porch or deck or left too close to a building that a spark could reach. Don't ever assume that the ashes are not hot. They can stay warm enough to cause a fire for several days.

The Westminster Fire & Rescue Association welcomes donations throughout the year from anyone wishing to remember a loved one or a friend.

Memorial donations for January

In memory of Marie Wright from Allison and David Dean

Donations received from the following in January:

Jim Massey

Jeffrey Shumlin and Evelyn Lovett

Peter Lefcort

Ruth Grandy

Myra Ashcroft

Fran Walsh

Christine and Ken Cook

Chrystal Morse

Westminster Cares

Barbara Greenough

Sylvia and Lynn Lawrence

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: From time to time there is a need for food to be brought to the Fire House. During calls when the fire fighters are out for an extended period of time, having something to eat or drink when they return is a huge compliment. Also, once in a great while there are special events which require feeding a large number of people.

If you are available and are willing to be on a call list for these occasions or if you just want more information, call Chief Cole Streeter or June Streeter at 802-722-3178 and let them know. This is a great way to help the people who help the community in so many ways. Thanks in advance.

We are always looking for new members: Anyone interested in volunteering their time to help the community in a time of need, please contact Chief Cole Streeter at 722-3178 or stop by the Firehouse any Sunday morning and pick up an application.

We would like to have additional volunteers from the Westminster West area. There is a Fire House, an engine and a rescue vehicle located in Westminster West and more help is needed to utilize that equipment during calls.

As always, we would like to thank the community for its continued support of the fire department.

The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association, Inc. operates independently from Westminster Fire District #3.

OPEN MIC AT THE INSTITUTE

There will be an open mic on Saturday, Feb. 23 at the Westminster Institute from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Come sit with neighbors and enjoy the music. Coffee, tea and desserts will be available. Donations are appreciated

Sponsored by the Westminster Activities Commission.

WEDNESDAY MORNING WALKS INSIDE

The walking group sponsored by Westminster Cares that began in August of this year is moving indoors for the winter. We will be walking in the gym at the Institute on Wednesday mornings from 9 to 10 a.m. There will be a variety of walking styles and we will be walking with music to jazz it up a bit.

Please bring inside walking shoes so we don't scratch the wooden floor. It is always good to have water to drink when exercising.

Come join us for fun, exercise and socializing. Call Westminster Cares for more information at 722-3607.

Snowy Drops of Milk

by Babs Lynde, a Vermont Master Gardener

If you are as eager as I am to discover the first traces of flowery life as the snow begins to melt and give way to early spring, then you know bulbs usually generate the first of those signs. Tulips, daffodils, and crocuses are the usual menagerie, but there is one flower that tempts their fate far earlier than the others, and we know it as the snowdrop.

Native to Europe, the snowdrop is found throughout France, Germany, Poland, Switzerland and Austria, as well as northern Italy. It prefers to grow in semi-sheltered spots such as sparsely wooded or rocky areas. They are often found in clumps or groups and can be as few as a handful of blossoms to a blanket-like layer covering an area by the thousands. Its Latin name, Galanthus, means "milk white" which describes the color of the flower that also bears a pencil-thin trimming of a light lime green.

They are perennial, which means they grow back every year from their bulbs, and are also herbaceous, meaning the flower, leaves and stems die back after blossoming until their next growing season. Each bulb produces only two or three leaves and an erect, leafless scape, or the stalk, that supports one solitary, pendulous, bell-shaped white flower that looks very much like a few drops of milk.

There are approximately 75 species in the snowdrop family, but only two or three are commonly grown, including the common snowdrop and the giant snowdrop, one only slightly larger than the other by a couple of centimeters. Most varieties are between 4 and 6 inches high and are suitable for hardiness zones of 2 to 9, but grow the most prolific between 4 and 7. They are often referred to as the winter lilies-of-the-valley.

Although very small in size, the snowdrops can be quite impressive when they spread out like a carpet. In 2007, Scotland had its first Snowdrop Festival between February and March in which sixty gardens took part, making it a notable event. There are also many famous snowdrop gardens in England and Ireland. If you have internet access, it is well worth looking for them!

Snowdrop bulbs can be a little fussy in where they want to grow, so you may want to experiment a bit by placing a handful in various areas. They should be placed in a semi sunny area, and they prefer well drained soil such as on the side of a bank or slope.

Bury the bulbs about 2 inches, or follow the instructions that came with the bulbs, or ask someone at your friendly, neighborhood nursery for advice. I like to place a few spoonfuls of rich compost in their beds before covering them over to give them a good head start. Be sure to earth the bulbs in late fall, as most bulbs should be done. If they like their new growing spot, you may actually see them stick out their foliage a few weeks before even the earliest crocuses show up. Then, if left alone, they can spread to create a beautiful white, springtime carpet. Don't forget to take pictures!

Would you like more information about the early snowdrop flower? The Master Gardeners of Vermont are trained to help you with all your gardening needs.

Call their Helpline toll-free at 1-800-639-2230, send questions by email to master.gardener@uvm.edu or visit www.uvm.edu/mastergardener for extensive information.

Aged in Vermont

Westminster Cares, Inc.

**WESTMINSTER CARES CELEBRATES
25-YEAR ANNIVERSARY IN 2013**



It takes a village and a whole lot more to create an organization that has survived and thrived for the past twenty-five years. Westminster Cares would like you to know how appreciative we are for your support. From its inception, the organizers, board members, volunteers and the entire town of Westminster have all been part of the foundation that has become an important part of this wonderful section of southeastern Vermont.

Words fall short when it comes to expressing our appreciation and heartfelt gratitude for our community. So in an effort to say thank you, 2013 will be a year of celebration and recognition.

We'll start the festivities off with a Speaker Series:

Jane E. Brody, above, Personal Health columnist for *The New York Times* and writer on science and nutrition, will speak on Wednesday, April 17, the first event in our Westminster Cares' 25th Anniversary Speaker Series. Brody's talk will take place at 5:30 p.m. at Kurn Hattin Homes. It is open to the public; donations are appreciated.

Brody joined *The New York Times* in 1965 as a full-time specialist in medicine and biology. In 1976 she became *The Times's* "Personal Health" columnist. Her column appears every Tuesday in *The Times's* Science Times section and in many other newspapers around the country.

Other speaking events will be held through the remainder of 2013, including the following two speakers. A third will be announced shortly.

* May 14, Dennis McCullough, M.D, geriatrician at Dartmouth Medical School, author of *My Mother, Your Mother* and practitioner of Slow Medicine, will speak at the Butterfield Institute.

* September 17, Willem Lange, author and commentator for Vermont and New Hampshire public radio, will speak at the Butterfield Institute.

Our annual Westminster Cares' annual Garden Tour is scheduled for June 29-30. Several other special events will be slated as the year progresses, so be sure to stay tuned.

For more information on any of these events, go to www.westminstercares.org or call 722-3607.

Westminster Cares is a nonprofit organization working with seniors and disabled adults in Westminster, Vermont, to help them remain healthy and independent in the community. It was founded in 1988.

"Old age ain't no place for sissies," Bette Davis said. Well, sissies or not, we're all headed for that place. And the better we know the geography, the easier it will be to navigate.

"Aged in Vermont" is a monthly article on aging issues, organized by Westminster Cares. We're asking local professionals and residents with an interest in these issues to write them.

The articles are not just reading material for the "aged." Young, old and middle-aged readers – anyone with an elderly parent, relative or friend, or who just wants to learn about these important issues that affect us all – is invited to take a look. Remember: "It's not how old you are; it's how you are old."

We address such topics as losing a pet, sleeping problems, supplements, advanced directives and creativity. We explore questions such as should I move to town? and decision making: whose life is this anyway?

Ideas for future columns? Would you like to write one? We'd like to hear from you. Email Ronnie Friedman at wecares@sover.net.

GRACE BIBLE FELLOWSHIP SERVICES

The Grace Bible Fellowship holds its Sunday Worship Service at 9:15 a.m. at 38 Elm Street in Walpole, NH.

Find out more about the church at its Web site, www.gb4hisglory.com/.

WESTMINSTER MYSTERY PHOTO



When was the Westminster Seal first used, and who designed it?

You may e-mail your answer to westminsternews@gmail.com or wminster@comcast.net or phone Babs Lynde at 722-9516.

The answer and the winners will be announced in the next issue.

Last Month's Answer: On Page 3.

If you have pictures you think would make a great mystery photo stop by the town office and see Babs Lynde.

We are looking for more mystery pictures. Have any?

**Send Your News To:
westminsternews@gmail.com**

WHAT WOULD YOU SELL YOUR PROPERTY FOR?

Most people have no clue what their property is worth, but no one wants to pay the taxes associated with their real estate. That's human nature.

Unfortunately, we still need to pay for our schools, fire department, town government, road maintenance and improvements, and we pay for them through our municipal taxes.

In the Vermont state statutes, 32 V.S.A. § 4041 says that all taxable properties are to be assessed at the same amount as what they would sell for in a fair and open market.

So, if you were to advertise your property to the general public, and it sold for \$150,000, it is also the value it should have been set at in the Grand List. If the Grand List valued your property at \$125,000, then you were not paying your fair share in the municipal taxing system. That would also apply if it were set for far more than what the property sold for, however this does not apply to bankruptcy, estate or tax sales or selling property privately at a reduced amount.

How can you make sure your property is assessed properly? Most important, check your records at the Listers' office at the Town Hall. Be sure that all current information is correct and accurate. If you still believe, in your opinion, the assessed value is set too high or low, then check with a local real estate agent or a professional bank appraiser to see what they believe your property is worth.

But remember, all values are opinions until the sale of a property is finalized, and it may require extensive research on your part to ensure your listed value is the closest to the actual fair market value.

During this on-going town-wide reappraisal, will the assessed value of your property go up or down? Hard to tell until your Listers have placed your information into the appraisal software, but when the work is finished, you will receive a written notification of any change in the assessment along with instructions as to how to proceed if you have objections to the new value.

Please remember, however, that the tax rate is set by the select board according to how you, the taxpayer, vote on Annual Town Meeting Day, so be sure to vote!

If you have any questions or concerns, please call 722-9516 or e-mail blynde@westminstervt.org.

WESTMINSTER CARES ANNUAL GARDEN TOUR, JUNE 29 AND 30

Westminster Cares will hold its twelfth annual Garden Tour on Saturday and Sunday, June 29 and 30. The tour will again feature the gardens of Mary and Gordon Hayward, nationally known garden designer, writer and lecturer.

Four other Westminster gardens are also on the tour. The tour will be 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Sunday.

Come celebrate with us – this is Westminster Cares' 25th anniversary year!

For more information on the tour, check our website for updates: www.westminstercares.org. E-mail us at wecares@sover.net or call 802-722-3607.

Proceeds from the tour support the services and programs of Westminster Cares, a volunteer organization whose purpose is to create opportunities for seniors and disabled adults to live with independence and dignity in the community.

WESTMINSTER HAPPENINGS

Activities

Scottish Country Dance Classes

Every Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. in the Westminster Center School Gym. Bernard McGrath, instructor. All skill levels welcome. Contact Michael Daley for more information at 387-2601. No charge.

Putney Contra Dance

Last Saturday of every month at Pierce Hall on East Putney Falls Road, off Rt. 5 in East Putney. A beginner's workshop is taught at 8 p.m., and the regular dance goes from 8:30 to 11. A donation at the door will benefit the Pierce's Hall Building Fund. For more information call 387-5985.

Senior Potluck Lunch

Every 2nd Thursday of the month at noon. All Westminster seniors are invited to attend a potluck lunch at the First Congregational Church on Route 5.

Bellows Falls Gallery Walk

Downtown at 5:30 p.m. every 3rd Friday of the month.

Secrets of Healthy Aging

A facilitated discussion group and pot-luck. The 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month at the Westminster Fire Station from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Call Westminster Cares at 722-3607 for more information.

Contra Dance

Every 3rd Saturday of the month at 7:30

p.m. at the Town Hall in Walpole, N.H.

Gentle Yoga

Every Monday at 10 a.m. at the Westminster Institute. Call Westminster Cares at 722-3607 for more information.

Living Strong Classes

Mondays & Thursdays at the First Congregational Church in Westminster from 9 to 10 a.m. or at the Westminster West Church from 6 to 7 p.m. Call Westminster Cares for more information at 722-3607.

Knitting Together

Join us every Wednesday, from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Village Square Booksellers, downtown Bellows Falls. Bring your knitting needles, we have the yarn and casual instruction if needed to knit hats, mittens and sweaters for area kids.

All our yarn is from community donation and we distribute our completed work to all area schools and Parks Place. More knitters at all skill levels are wanted and we can promise you an enjoyable experience. For details or to donate yarn contact Caroline at 463-4653.

Faith Community

The First Congregational Church of Westminster

The Rev. Sami Jones McRae, Pastor. Main Street, Route 5, P.O. Box 122, Westminster, 722-4148. Sunday worship at 10 a.m. Communion is the first Sunday of each month.

Sunday School is held at 10 a.m. from September to May. The church has a ramp and lift for wheelchair access as well as a handicapped bathroom. Westminster First Congregational is an open and affirming church, all are welcome.

The Congregational Church of Westminster West (UCC Church)

The Congregational Church of Westminster West (United Church of Christ) worships every Sunday at 10 a.m. The pick-up choir meets most Sundays at 9 to rehearse for that morning's anthem; newcomers to choir are always welcome!

Holy Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of every month, and on the Second Sunday the church collects a special offering that goes to Our Place in Bellows Falls to help fund their food shelf.

The church building is fully wheelchair accessible, and the congregation is Open and Affirming. Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno is the pastor, and musicians are Jennifer Hed and Margit Lilly.

Rev. Webster-Toleno currently holds office hours on Monday and Thursday afternoons, and people are welcome to drop by. However, since "office hours" sometimes means she's out visiting people in their homes, it's a good idea to make an appointment if you really want to catch her.

She can be reached at the church on those days at 387-2334, via cell phone at 579-8356 or e-mail susiewt@gmail.com.

Meetings

Selectboard 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Hall.

Planning and Development

Commission 2nd Monday at 7 p.m. in the Town Hall.

Westminster Activities Commission

2nd Monday of the Month at 6 p.m. at the Westminster Institute.

Westminster School Board

1st and 3rd Tuesday at 7 p.m. at the Westminster Center School Library.

Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association

3rd Thursday at 7 p.m. at the Westminster West Congregational Church

Westminster West Public Library Board

2nd Wednesday at 7 p.m. at the Westminster West Public Library

Development Review Board

1st Monday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Town Hall

Community Improvement Program Committee

meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m.

Westminster Cares Board

1st Wednesday of every month, at the Westminster Fire Station at 4 p.m.

911 Committee as needed.

The Westminster Fire & Rescue Dept.

holds their monthly meetings on the 1st Tuesday of every month, at 7 p.m. and a combined drill on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at the Westminster Fire Station.

Westminster Historical Society

2nd Tuesday at 7 p.m. at the Westminster Institute.

Westminster Gazette Meeting

Tuesday, February 27 at 7:30 a.m.

Westminster Recycling Committee

Every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Westminster Fire Station

GOT ANY INTERESTING STORIES ABOUT WESTMINSTER AND THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE HERE? WANT TO SHARE SOME LOCAL HISTORY, OR REMINISCE ABOUT SOME OF OUR TOWN'S INTERESTING PEOPLE? THE GAZETTE IS LOOKING FOR CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OUR READERS, AND IF YOU HAD PHOTOS TO GO WITH THE STORY, ALL THE BETTER. CONTACT US BY E-MAIL AT WESTMINSTERNEWS@GMAIL.COM.

COMPASS SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

Compass School in Westminster is hosting an Open House on Tuesday, Febr. 5 from 6 to 8 p.m.

Compass School serves 7-12 grades since 1999 with a relevant, rigorous, and respectful learning opportunity. We welcome prospective students and their families for dinner, tour, and presentation.

Please RSVP and/or ask questions of Admissions Director Betsy Jaffe at 463-2517 or online at betsy@compass-school.org. www.compass-school.org. Compass School is just north of Bellows Falls High School at 7892 US Route 5 in Westminster.

WESTMINSTER CARES THANKS YOU ALL

In the immortal words of William Shakespeare, "We can no other answer make, but thanks, thanks, and thanks." Westminster Cares would like to extend deep gratitude to each member of the community who donated to our 2012 Annual Appeal and to the Thomas Thompson Trust for issuing the challenge grant.

We had an incredible response from so many, which helped us "rise to the challenge" and reach our goal. In doing so, the Thomas Thompson Trust has generously donated an additional \$10,000 to support the mission of Westminster Cares. The funds will be used to support the programs and services of Westminster Cares and to create opportunities for seniors and adults with disabilities to live with dignity and independence in the community.

For more information about programs and services currently offered visit www.westminstercares.org.

THE GAZETTE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OF ITS UNDERWRITERS:

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Westminster School District
Town of Westminster
Durand Automotive Group
Westminster Activities Commission
Sojourns Community Health Clinic
Westminster Cares
Westminster Fire & Rescue Association
The Current operated by the Connecticut River Transit

WESTMINSTER GAZETTE
Editor: Robert Smith
Board of Directors:
Elizabeth Harlow - Chairwoman
Ronnie Friedman
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Pictures and Articles
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The Deadline for The March 2013 Issue of the Westminster Gazette is Wednesday, February 27 by 5 p.m. Publish Date is Tuesday, March 5

To Contact the Westminster Gazette E-mail

westminsternews@gmail.com

WARNING FOR THE 2013 WESTMINSTER ANNUAL MEETING

The legal voters of the Town of Westminster are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Bellows Falls Union High School Auditorium in Westminster, Vermont on Saturday, March 2, 2013 at 10 a.m. to take action on the Articles following Article 1.

The meeting will be recessed to the Westminster Institute, East Parish, Westminster, Vermont to meet at 8 a.m. on Tuesday, March 5, 2013 for the consideration of Article 1 by Australian Ballot. The polls shall remain open until 7 p.m. at which time the meeting will recess to meet at the Bellows Falls Union High School Auditorium at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, March 5, 2013 to consider any remaining articles, if necessary.

Article 1: To choose all Town Officers, Fire District Number 3 Officers and Town School District Officers. (Australian ballot, Tuesday, March 5, 2013 from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.)

Article 2: To hear the reports of the Town Officers and to take action thereon.

Article 3: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminster will reduce the late tax penalty for delinquent taxes from 8% to 3% if all taxes, penalty and interest are paid within 30 days of the second installment due date.

Article 4: Shall the Town of Westminster provide notice that the Financial Audit is available, in lieu of publication of the Annual Town Report, as authorized by 24 V.S.A. 1682: Said notice of availability to be provided not less than 30 days before the annual meeting by publication in the *Westminster Gazette*, the *Brattleboro Reformer*, on the Westminster website www.westminstervt.org, and posted in the office of the Town Clerk. Copies of the Financial Audit will be available at the Westminster Town Hall, Westminster West Library, and Butterfield Library. The town shall mail or distribute a copy of the Financial Audit to any voter or resident upon request.

Article 5: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminster will raise and appropriate an amount of money not to exceed \$37,000 to support a shared services contract with the Windham County Sheriff's Department and Town of Putney, to provide the equivalent of a full time Sheriff's Deputy assigned to the Town of Westminster.

Article 6: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminster will raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,500 for the Westminster Recreation Club to be used for the purchase of insurance and maintenance of swimming pool.

Article 7: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminster will raise and appropriate the sum of \$130,000 for the Town Highway Equipment Reserve Fund.

Article 8: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminster will raise and appropriate the sum of \$15,000 for the Bridge Rehabilitation Reserve Fund.

Article 9: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminster will approve total general fund expenditures of \$1,814,795, for the period of July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014 of which \$1,578,625 shall be raised by taxes and \$383,670 by non-tax revenues.

Article 10: To transact any other proper business to be brought before the Town Meeting.

Dated at Westminster, Vermont this 25th day of January, 2013.

Town of Westminster Selectboard

Paul Harlow - Chair, Nathan Stoddard, Toby Young - Clerk, Craig Allen and Peter Barrett

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RESPIRE GRANTS FOR CAREGIVERS

Senior Solutions (Council on Aging for Southeastern Vermont) offers Dementia Respite Grants funded by the State of Vermont. These grants help primary unpaid caregivers of elders to get respite services for a time of rest and relief from caregiving.

This grant requires a diagnosis of Dementia, and there is an income qualification. However, there are other grants and resources for caregivers in various situations, so all caregivers are encouraged to call and find out what kind of help they qualify for.

For more information or application assistance, call the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-642-5119.

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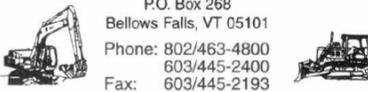
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WESTMINSTER SCHOOLS CELEBRATE DIVERSITY

Students here in the Westminster Schools had two special opportunities recently to learn more about diversity, what it means, and the importance of celebrating our differences.

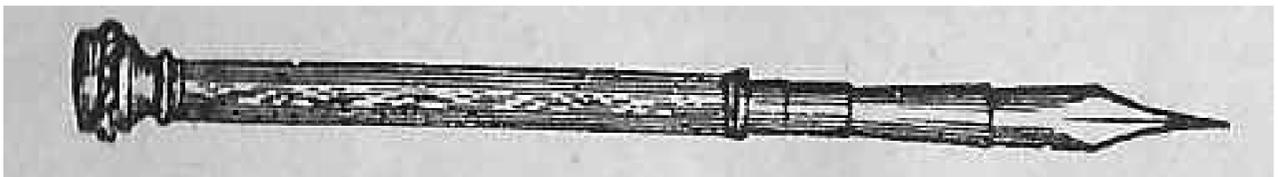
In honor of the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday, all students participated in an All School Meeting that featured the life and message of Dr. King. Fifth grade teacher (and storyteller) Cynthia Payne-Meyer held the entire audience in rapt attention as she opened with a story about the early life of Dr. King, when as a young boy he first learned from his own parents some of the painful truths of segregation and discrimination.

Students also had a chance to learn about and discuss the dream of Martin Luther King. They shared their ideas about creating a world where each person is treated fairly, and we talked about how it is each person's responsibility

to make sure that our school and community is free from prejudice and intolerance. Students sang songs that highlighted the themes of diversity, freedom and social justice, and they watched a brief video about the life and struggles of Dr. King.

Westminster students also traveled to Kurn Hattin the following week to join their school community in a special assembly that included two wonderful performances by Kurn Hattin students. The first was a theatrical piece about bullying in schools that was led by Stephan Stearns, the creative director of the New England Youth Theater. The second performance was a percussion ensemble led by Todd Roach from Kindle Farm.

These activities are part of an ongoing effort in the Westminster Schools to give our young people an education that prepares them to live in a diverse world!



Our Monthly Community Newspaper February 2013 Vol. 9, No. 2

Westminster Gazette

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